

READING CULTURE: AN EFFECTIVE INGREDIENT FOR KNOWLEDGE ADVANCEMENT

BY

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Abstract

The place of reading in the general advancement of man and his society cannot be over accentuated. In a society where reading habit and necessary enabling supports are inadequate or vague, the future of such society is threatened. This work is titled reading culture: an effective ingredient, for knowledge advancement. One of the definitions given to reading habit is that it is the frequency of reading, and the average time spent on reading materials. It is noted that one interesting legacy to hand down to students is teaching them to become life-long learners through reading and love of books. Reading skills include the left to right orientation, letter sound correspondences, avoidance the influence of mother-tongue and the love to read always. Reading is said to be synonymous with learning and education, it is stated that reading culture is a vital tool for the enhancement of human intellectual abilities and that it be difficult for a society to attain meaningful development and growth if they do not make reading as part of their culture. It is noted that the issue of declining reading culture among Nigerian students has continued to pose a major challenge to the Government, parents, teachers and the society at large literacy, poverty, Internet among others were said to be causes of poor reading culture. It is recommended among others that reading should start at the very stage of a child's life. Parents should also take time out to teach their children on how to read and also cultivate the habit of reading themselves so that their children can see what to emulate.

Keywords: Reading, Reading Culture, knowledge advancement

Introduction

The place of reading in the general advancement of man and his society cannot be over accentuated. However, where reading habit and necessary enabling support are inadequate or vague, the future of such society is threatened. Cambridge English Dictionary defined

advancement as the improvement of something or, an improvement relating to a particular activity or area of knowledge.

Knowledge advancement therefore can be seen as the upward progression of one's knowledge. An individual can advance in knowledge by moving from the level of reciting of alphabet to two or three letter words reading level and from there to a full text reading level depending on the level of training giving to the person. The importance of reading in the life of an individual cannot be overemphasized. To students, reading is a key to success. According to (Etiu 2002), reading is the decoding of written symbols for meaning communication, while Nssien (2007) defined reading culture as a process of building up positive reading attitude among students and children over For effective reading culture, there must be constant practicing became reading has a skill which must be learnt and practiced. Reading skills include the following.

- The left to right orientation
- Letter sound correspondences
- Avoidance of the influence of mother-tongue
- The love to read always (Obi, 2013)

Reading as seen by Dare (2007) involves critically examining and interiorizing ideas from printed materials. The human mind is kept alert through constant stimulation that result from engaging in dialogue with books. This means that reading enlightens the mind, makes the intellect sharper and makes Individual travel far in the realm of knowledge.

According to Emmanuel and Anele (2019) Reading can be said to synonymous learning and education. The role of reading in Improvement of human life and his society cannot be overemphasized adds value to life and it is also a pathway to the future, Reading stimulates imagination, widens views, expands horizons, encourages quick learning and helps in learning about different people and places. Reading is not just about printed matter, but about the ability to interpret anything that is intended to convey a message or that which is to enable communication Reading can be said to be the foundation of most forms of learning activities. One of the most important factors in education is the ability to read, understand and critically apprehend the text.

The art of reading can be in interesting experience for children and adolescents if they are guided. It in a common saying that students are the future leaders, invariably every child is a potential leader. To this effect, it should be noted that leaders are made and not just born.

Observation has shown that some students that have poor reading culture may find it more challenging to complete class assignments. More so the poor performance of students in examinations may be attributed to poor reading culture because some students begin active reading few days or hours before the examination day. This period is when you see them visit the library, curry books about just to pass their exams after which they will abandon their books till another exam period or season. Students with such habit will be myopia but when students

habitually and regularly read books and other information materials that are not necessarily required for them to advance in their field of study, such students are said to have good reading culture.

Reading habit refers to the frequency of reading, and the average time spent on materials. It is also the culture or habit that enables one to imbibe reading and studying as a basis of growth and development. For the purpose of this paper, the two terms "reading culture" "reading habit" will be used interchangeably.

One interesting legacy to hand down to students is teaching them to become life-long learners through reading and love of books. Once this culture is inculcated in them, their ability to study independently mind excel academically will increase. Reading culture is a vital tool for enhancement of human intellectual abilities emphatically, it may be difficult for a society to attain meaningful development and growth if they do not make reading a part of their lives and culture because cultivating reading culture is an important developmental strategy to individuals and nations at large. Reading culture is a tradition of people who place high premium on reading such that they become active and enthusiastic readers (UNESCO, 2012).

Furthermore, reading culture entails inculcating reading and studying as pan of the societal value system and as basis for growth and development. It is the type that sees continuous and dedicated reading of information resources in students and non-students for knowledge acquisitions, which will be practically applied for personal and national development. Reading culture is acquired as result of quality formal und non-formal instruction in a number or languages, phonological awareness, vocabulary, text comprehension and active engagement with text.

Reading is an essential tool for lifelong learning. It is important for everyone to develop the rudiments of reading and the culture of reading always so us in survive in life. Reading according to Holte (2008 as quoted in Amooer et al 2015) adds quality to life and provides access to culture and cultural heritage. They pointed out that reading empowers and emancipates citizens and bring people together. Okeke (2000) reaffirms that the art of reading is a priceless instrument for everyone. It is one of the most important activities of life through which we enter into the life and experiences of others and extend our knowledge and scope of experience Reading has critical role to play in the overall development of an individual and the nation at large. Reading of literature improves one's command of English language and the habit of reading good literature helps ate to decipher new words and phrases which may be encountered in everyday conversation.

Reading serves as a tool for the access and enhancement of intellectual properties of people from generation to generation so as to ensure continuous human and societal transformations and developments. According to Sisule (2004) reading is one of the fundamental building blocks of learning. Becoming a skilled and adaptable reader enhances the chances of success in academies and more academic success and self empowerment among students is highly realizable through the act of intensive rending Reading culture entrances educational goals and consequently, good readers become declaimers and they are also fluent in their use of language

secular and academic discussions Reading is not meant for success examinations, it has the potential to enhance individual political participation in a democratic and structured society. Similarly, Osundare (2009) emphatically remarks that a country's level of development is a function of its level of mental and cultural evolution as well as the state of its educational advancement, reading culture is essential for this achievement. The act of reading (reading culture) serves as agent of human transformations by changing and enhancing the destiny of people for better through their access to the intellectual properties of others that were written down. The flow of ideas cannot be stopped hence, one needs to read and research to build on good ideas. The ability of a student to achieve the general objectives of formal education which is anchored on self-development in order to achieve rational development is highly interwoven with meaningful reading.

The nation as a political entity is not exempted from enjoying the benefits that emanate from reading populace Reading enhances the application of recorded knowledge into use where the citizens can readily be mobilized for attainment of political, educational, social and economic goals of the nation (Mefor 2011).

The issue of declining reading culture among Nigerian students has continued to pose a major challenge to the Government, parents, teachers and the society at large. The consequences, as observed have permeated the entire divisions of the country therefore, making the quality of graduates from the nation's schools to fall below standard. This implies surprisingly that even Nigerian undergraduate students are also the victims of poor reading culture. According to Onifade (2012) there has been a growing concern that reading culture among Nigerians especially students has waned significantly, and that many students never borrow or read a book from their library throughout their stay in school. Poor reading culture leads to academic failure which is not only frustrating to the students and the parents, but also affects the society in terms of dearth of manpower in all spheres of the economy. The poor state of reading culture among students will have adverse effect on the educational sector, therefore it deserves attention and improvement in order to enhance students' contribution to societal development.

The importance of reading culture cannot be over emphasized. It serves as the connector between the past and the future, a window of wealth of knowledge or expansion of knowledge horizons and gateway for transformation of the society. Reading shapes moral, moderates behaviour and attitude towards development. It is indispensable ingredient of education and thus development.

Reading is regarded as indispensable instrument for equipping citizenry with knowledge, skills and attitudes required for economic self-sufficiency, poverty reduction and sustainable development Reading culture is the underlying factor of academic success. It is regarded as activity done over and over again to acquire and upgrade knowledge, skills and attitude and represents a fundamental building block of learning and general development of a society, This suffices to say that the economic, social and political health of any country is subject to building citizens with reading culture,

Causes of Poor Reading Culture

Many factors contribute to the poor reading culture being experienced in our society these days. Braunger & Lewis, 2006 state that many people in Nigeria have attributed students' non-challant attitude to reading which ends in mass failure of students in both internal and external examinations to the use of the Internet. It is therefore, certainly no exaggeration to posit that reading culture among Nigerian students has dwindled since the exponential growth and modern advances in information and communication technologies.

Obi (2013) quoting Salaka and Akinbode (200k) state that high rate of illiteracy among parents inhibits reading. This is because, illiterate parents cannot serve as role models to their children because education starts at home und these parents cannot give what they do not have. Poverty is another contributing factor to poor reading culture. The result of this is that these children will not be exposed to appropriate reading materials.

Experience has shown that reading in our society is poor and this is very disheartening. The situation gave rise to the saying that if one wants to keep any information private and confidential in Nigeria, one should simply write it in a book, the piece of information will never be discovered by the majority of people because they do not read. There is reading phobia in our society. A lot of people do not read for pleasure, they only read to pass examinations.

Recommendation for Improvement on the reading culture

Reading is very important in the educational life of every individual. The more one rends, the more one excels in academics. Reading should start at the very early stage of a child's life. Parents should take time out to teach their children on how to read and also cultivate the habit of reading themselves so that their children can see what to emulate. Parents should also endeavour to provide their children with reading materials in addition to the expensive toys they buy for Beautiful children's picture book gills would go a long way to rending instead of the very costly birthday gifts. Learned parents should in their own way always encourage their children to read by reminding and urging such children to look at their school books, the children should be encouraged to read for at least one hour each day. The parents or teachers can also appeal to children who are verse in reading to always teach the weaker ones. The information resource that promotes reading is fictions. The library should be stocked with enough fictions for the reading pleasure of its users.

Conclusion

Observations from the study indicated that reading culture contributes significantly to academic performance of students. It shows that the more emphasis is laid on reading culture the more likely the academic performance improves. Reading habit is indispensable to the achievement of good academic performance and important ingredient of economic empowerment. Reading culture is vital port of lifelong learning concept. Capability of understanding text and reading habits should be developed from early childhood all through the whole life. To be capable of doing these, students must develop their reading habits on a daily basis. Every nation prides

itself in the reading culture of its literate population. A good reading culture in any nation is an enviable virtue

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